

Parsons Nursery, Oil House  
South side of U.S. Route 219, .25 miles  
southeast of Parsons  
Parsons Vicinity  
Tucker County  
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-237-H

HABS  
WVA,  
47-PARS.V,  
1-H-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19108

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

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PARSONS NURSERY, Oil House

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Location: South side of U. S. Route 219, .25 miles  
southeast of Parsons, Tucker County, West  
Virginia

USGS Parsons Quadrangle, Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 17.614223.4327600

Present Owner: Monongahela National Forest  
Department of Agriculture  
Sycamore Street, Box 1548  
Elkins, WV 26241

Last Occupant: Cheat Ranger District  
Monongahela National Forest

Last Use: Fire fighting equipment storage

Significance: The oil storage house was built in 1939 for  
shared use between the Cheat Ranger District  
and the Parsons Nursery. There is no record  
of its construction. The building house  
drums of oil, used in the care of equipment,  
machines and vehicles used by the Cheat  
Ranger District or the Parsons Nursery. For  
overview of Parsons Nursery, see HABS No. WV-  
237.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1939, proposed building of this size, location and use noted on 1938 nursery survey (WV-237-38).
2. Architect: Neither architect nor landscape architect are known.
3. Original and present owner: Monongahela National Forest.
4. Builder: Not known.
5. Original Plans: None.
6. Alterations and additions: Staircase added or replaced since flood of 1985. To be demolished 1990.

B. Historical Context:

The oil storage house provided storage for flammable engine oil. The Cheat Ranger District used the north side of the building, the Parsons Nursery used the south side. After 1986, the entire building has been used for fire fighting equipment. Oil was stored in drums, mounted horizontally on wooden racks located along each side wall. A concrete floor gutter that ran in front of the oil storage racks collected any spilled oil, preventing a slippery, dirty, and flammable floor.

With the increase in the number of trucks and equipment at the Nursery Bottom following the establishment of the Cheat District office at the Parsons site, there was a need for a separate facility for storage of machine oil.

At its beginning, in 1928, the Parsons Nursery used only hand-driven tools and a Caterpillar tractor. Soon, the nursery employees modified a Ford Model A truck so that its wheel base would fit the 6' width of seed beds and paths. Shortly before the construction of this oil storage house, the nursery purchased a tractor with belt-track wheels, like a military tank (see WV-237-31). This machine could operate in muddy conditions and along the Black Fork River bank where sand was collected to cover the seeds in seed beds.

Monongahela National Forest relied on the Civilian Conservation Corps for all road construction and maintenance in the Forest from 1933 until 1942. The supervisor for this work, the Forest Engineer, had his office in Elkins. In

1942, Monongahela National Forest organized a maintenance program with Otis Fansler as foreman-equipment operator for the Cheat and Potomac Ranger Districts.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The oil storage house is one of a complex of Forest Service buildings constructed in a simple, rustic, gable-roofed, shingle style. This building uses native materials available in Monongahela National Forest, such as chestnut sheathing boards and joists, and it follows the local convention of exterior diagonal wind-brace sheathing with herringbone, centered joints used under sawn cedar shingle siding.
2. Condition of fabric: The building is structurally sound and in use.

### B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: A one-story, rectangular plan, this building is 30'-4" x 18'-4". It has four front bays and one side bay. It has an attic accessible by an open, stringer staircase.
2. Foundation: 8" concrete block with concrete pad.
3. Walls: Exterior walls are wood shingled with random width cedar cut shingles applied in courses of 5-1/2" exposure. There are 5" plain yellow-painted corner boards. The foundation-roof height at the corner is 9'-3"; 18'-7" foundation-peak height.
4. Structural system: The wood frame walls are not exposed. The rafters are "2x6's" on 26" centers with a "1x6" ridge board, covered in "1x6" tongue-and-groove sheathing. Attic joists are not exposed.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: None.
6. Chimneys: None.
7. Openings
  - a. Doorways and doors: The two front doorways have plain, 5-1/2" board architrave with butt-jointed head. Each doorway opening height is 7'-9-1/2", each door is 8'-1" and runs below the door sill. The sliding doors are similar to other sliding doors at

the nursery. Each has 3-1/2" top, bottom, and side styles with 5" tongue-and-groove boards set diagonally on the outside, vertically on the inside. Doors are 3-1/2" thick. Doors and doorway trim are painted yellow.

- b. Windows and shutters: Each side elevation has one window, the rear has two. All windows are the same. Window frames are plain, 5-1/2" butt-jointed jambs and heads. There are metal drip caps that extend 1" beyond the heads; 1-1/2" window sills; and 3" under sill boards. All sash is 1/1, double hung. Windows are 3'-10-1/2" x 3'-0". Window sash and trim are painted yellow. There never have been shutters.
8. Roof: The gable roof has asbestos shingles, a replacement of the original sawn cedar shingles. It has exposed rafter ends with a plain "1x8" fascia. On each gable end the "2x6" rake board has a 1" quarter-round molding at the shingle edge. The rake board is notched so that the "4x4" wall plate and "4x4" ridge piece extends 1" past the rake boards. The gable end overhang is 18", including the rake board; the eave overhang is 19", including the fascia. The cornice and exposed rafters are painted yellow. There is a rectangular, pressed galvanize louver roof vent at each end, approximately 14" x 20". There never have been gutters.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: The rectangular building originally was two rooms with a center partition.
- 2. Stairways: There is a new open stringer stair to the attic, replacing one damaged by the November, 1985, flood. It has a balustrade made of 1" galvanized pipe.
- 3. Flooring: The floor is unpainted concrete with a 10" concrete gutter, 3-1/2" deep, near the outer side walls.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Both walls and ceiling of the south room have "1x6" tongue-and-groove pine boards painted grey below and white above on the south side, unpainted on the north side. The ceiling height is 9'-3".
- 5. Openings:
  - a. Doors: The doorways have no jambs, but do have "2x10" facings and 10" sill, missing on the south doorway.

- b. Windows: The front room windows have 3-1/2" jambs and heads, butt-jointed, a 1" sill, and 3-1/2" under sill board. The sash is pine. The window jambs and sash on the south side are painted white; they are unpainted on the north.
- 6. Decorative features and trim: None.
- 7. Hardware: Each door has a plain iron cast 6" long pull and plain, modern iron strap hasp and keeper plate. The windows have no hardware.
- 8. Mechanical equipment: There is no indication of original heating system or plumbing. Lights are plain, ceiling-mounted porcelain bulb fixtures.
- 9. Original furnishings: There are free-standing, wooden supports for oil drums made of "2x4" legs and cross pieces supporting two "2x8's", cut-out with a curve to carry the front and back of the oil drums. There are four such carriages, each 6'-10" long, 1'-6" wide and 2'-3" tall.
- D. Site: The building faces northeast, 57°30' . It survives on its original site, together with most of the original nursery and Cheat District structures.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: None.
- B. Historic views: None.
- C. Interviews: Al Allison, 7-23-1989, Charleston, WV, Parsons Nursery manager, 1951-57; John King, 9-5-1989, Wanakena, NY, silviculture supervisor, CCC Camp Parsons, 1933-39; Dorsey Knight, 10-25-1989, Parsons, WV, Parsons Nursery employee, 1932-1951; Harry Mahoney, 6-10-1989, Elkins, WV, Cheat District Ranger, 1967-71.
- D. McKim, C. R., Monongahela National Forest History, unpublished manuscript, November, 1970.

Monongahela National Forest, Proposed Plan, Parsons Nursery, unpublished manuscript, 1938.

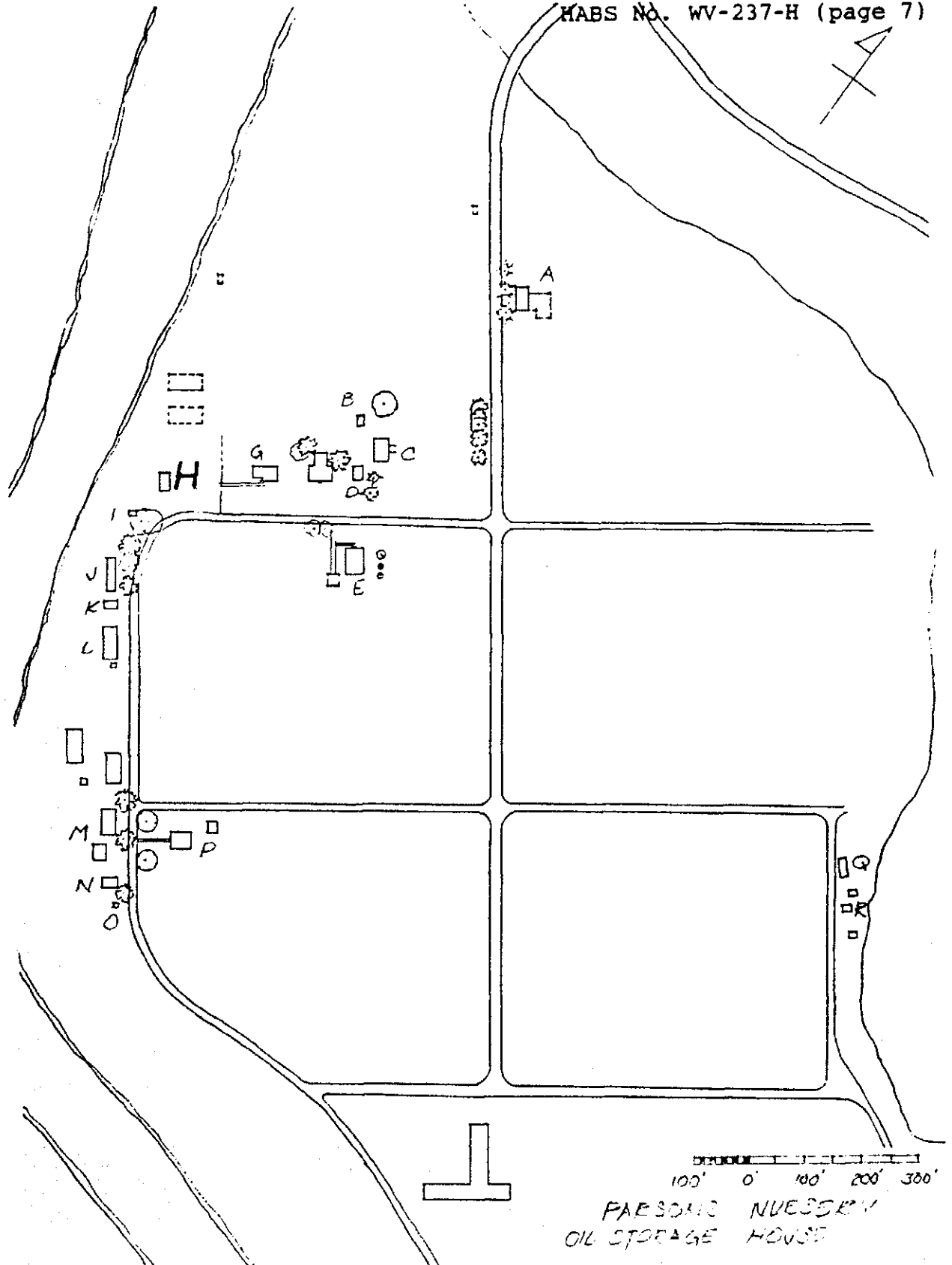
### PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The architectural and historical documentation of the Parsons Nursery site has been undertaken to fulfill a memorandum of agreement signed by the Advisory Council on Historic

Preservation, the West Virginia SHPO and the USDA Forest Service as part of requirements under regulation 36 CFR 800 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Recording has taken place prior to substantial modification and/or removal of structures damaged by a flood in November, 1985.

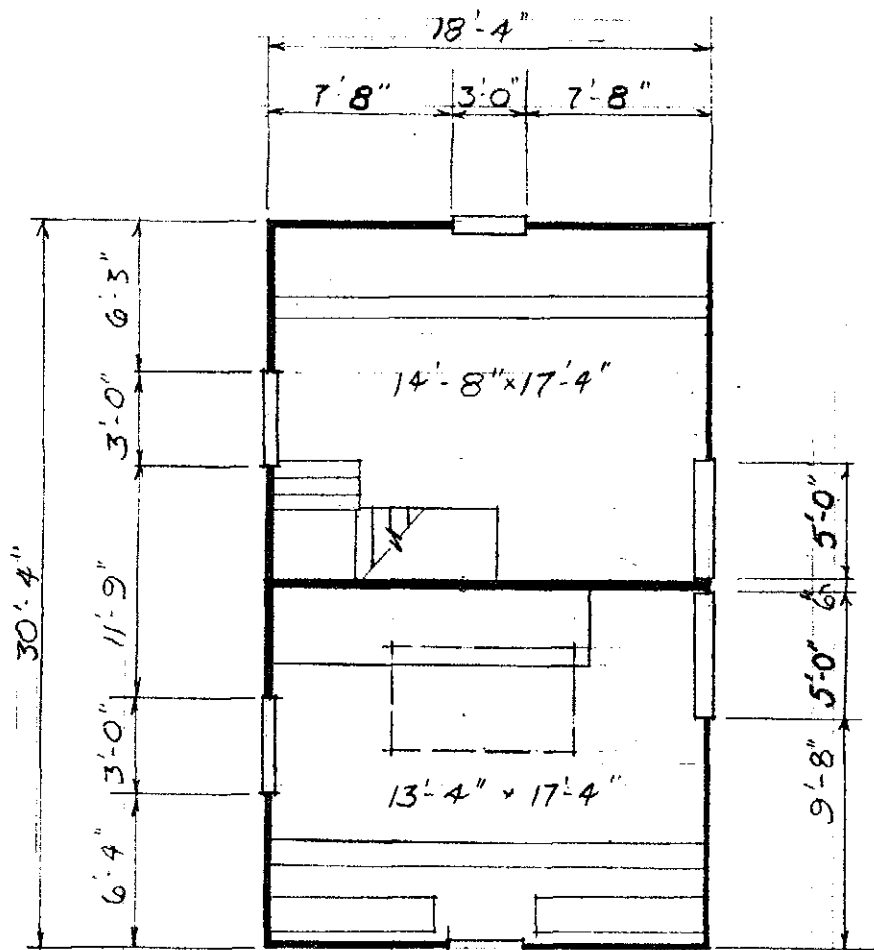
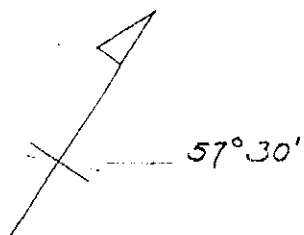
This documentation has been prepared by: Rebecca M. Rogers, Preservation Consultant, 44 Audubon Road, Youngstown, Ohio, under contract to Monongahela National Forest, April-November, 1989.

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OIL STORAGE HOUSE

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